

AO 91 (Rev. 08/09) Criminal Complaint

United States District Court  
Southern District of Texas  
FILED

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the  
Southern District of Texas

MAY - 1 2020

David J. Bradley, Clerk

United States of America  
v.  
Eli ESPINOZA  
YOB: 1996 Citizenship: United StatesCase No. MA-20-0921-MDefendant(s)

## CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of April 30, 2020 in the county of Hidalgo in the  
Southern District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:*Code Section*  
18 USC Section 554*Offense Description*  
Did knowingly and unlawfully export or attempt to export from the United States, any merchandise, article, or object, to wit: bolt carrier assemblies, bolt catches, rear pistol grips, and triggers, as defined by the United States Munitions List, contrary to any law or regulation of the United States, in that the Defendant had not obtained a license or written authorization for such export, in violation of Title 22, United States Code, Sections 2778(b)(2) and 2778(c) and Title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 121.1, 123.1, 127.1 and 127.3 all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 554.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See Affidavit

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.Approved by AUSA Angel  
Castro April 30, 2020Submitted by reliable electronic means, sworn to,  
attested to telephonically per Fed.R.Crim.P. 4.1,  
and probable cause found on:

Submitted by reliable electronic means, sworn to and attested to telephonically per Fed. R. Cr. P. 4.1, and probable cause found on:

Date: May 1, 2020 8:05 a.m.City and state: McAllen, Texas/s/ Ryan McTaggart*Complainant's signature*Ryan McTaggart Special Agent HSI*Printed name and title*Peter E Ormsby*Judge's signature*Peter E. Ormsby United States Magistrate Judge*Printed name and title*

Affidavit

On April 30, 2020, Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs) working outbound operations at the Hidalgo, Texas, Port of Entry encountered Eli ESPINOZA (hereafter referred to as ESPINOZA), the driver and sole occupant of a vehicle bearing Mexican license plates, as ESPINOZA was attempting to travel from the United States into Mexico.

ESPINOZA provided CBPOs with a negative declaration for tobacco, firearms, narcotics, and currency in excess of \$10,000.00 USD and was selected for secondary inspection.

After CBPOs referred ESPINOZA to the secondary inspection area, ESPINOZA fled from the inspection area in ESPINOZA's vehicle and was apprehended a short time later by CBPOs.

ESPINOZA and ESPINOZA's vehicle were returned to the Port of Entry and a subsequent search of ESPINOZA's vehicle resulted in the discovery multiple firearms components for a semi-automatic rifle, including but not limited to: bolt carrier assemblies, bolt catches, rear pistol grips, and triggers (hereafter referred to as firearms components).

The firearms components were concealed inside the engine area of ESPINOZA's vehicle.

On April 30, 2020, under rights advisement and waiver, ESPINOZA stated ESPINOZA had been recruited by someone in Mexico to travel to the United States and pick up items and smuggle them into Mexico.

ESPINOZA stated on April 30, 2020, ESPINOZA met with an unidentified individual near McAllen, Texas, who loaded the packages containing the firearms components into ESPINOZA's vehicle and ESPINOZA confirmed the packages were concealed in the engine area of ESPINOZA's vehicle before ESPINOZA drove the vehicle to the Hidalgo, Texas, Port of Entry and attempted to travel from the United States into Mexico.

ESPINOZA stated ESPINOZA fled from CBPOs when ESPINOZA was referred to secondary because ESPINOZA knew ESPINOZA was involved in something illegal and did not want to be caught.

According to the Department of State, Office of Defense Trade Controls Compliance (DTCC), bolt carrier assemblies, bolt catches, rear pistol grips, and triggers are determined to be defense articles described on the United States Munitions List (USML) and regulated for export pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778).